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HERCULES FURENS:

A TRAGEDY OF SENECA.

TRANSLATED BY

A D A M I D E S.

JAM CÆRULEIS ERECTUS EQNIS—SENECA

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HERCULES FURENS.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

JUNO, Wife to Jupiter.

HERCULES, Son to Jupiter, a Theban Hero.

MEGARA, Wife to Hercules.

LYCUS, a Theban Usurper.

AMPHITRYON, Reputed Father to Hercules.

THESEUS, Companion to Hercules.

Chorus of Thebans.

SCENE IN THEBES.

ACT FIRST.

SCENE FIRST.

JUNO.

I, an abandoned sister of the Thunderer, (this name alone is left me now,) have left Jove, always alienated from me, and the temples of the sky, and driven from heaven, have given up my place to mistresses. I must propitiate the earth, for mistresses hold heaven. Here, from a lofty station in the northern sky, the Bear, a lustrous constellation, guides the Grecian fleets; and here, where, as the spring advances, day is lengthened, Taurus shines, who bore Europa through the Tyrian waves; and here, the wandering Pleiades look with foreboding aspect on the ships and sea; and here Orion with his threatening club affrights the gods: here Perseus has his stars: here the twin sons of Tyndarus, a brilliant constellation, shine, and those, for whose delivery the floating island rested. Nor are Semele and Bacchus all, who have been numbered with the gods: that no spot may be free from shame, the heavens bear the Crown of Ariadne. But I am complaining of too old affronts. How often has that hateful land of

Thebes alone, profuse of shameless women, borne my husband
 sons ! Alcmena is allowed to go aloft and hold my place, my
 victor ; and her son too, for whose birth the world gave up a day,
 and Phœbus, ordered to retain his brightness sunk beneath the
 Ocean, late illumed the Eastern sea, Alcides, has a promised seat
 in heaven. My wrath shall not thus die away : my raging soul
 shall cherish lasting hatred, and my cruel grief shall rupture peace
 and wage eternal war. What war ? Whatever monster hateful
 Earth has fathered, Hercules has conquered ; and whatever frightful,
 dreadful, loathesome, fierce and savage thing the sea or air affords,
 has been subdued and tamed ; and yet he lives and strengthens by
 his evils, and enjoys my rage : he makes my very hate his praise :
 by my too harsh commands I have made known his father : I have
 been the cause of his renown : his valor unsubdued is worshipped
 where the sun brings back the morning, and where he renews the
 evening, and where Ethiopia's coasts are scorched by his near
 torch : through all the world he is declared a god. Already
 monsters fail me ; and it is less difficult for Hercules to execute my
 orders, than for me to find commands. He gladly undertakes what-
 ever I impose on him. What harsh commands of Eurystheus can
 harm the eager youth ? He even bears for weapons what he once
 has feared and overcome : he comes armed with the Lion and the
 Hydra. Earth is too contracted for him : he has even burst the
 gates of hell, and bears his booty from its conquered king up to
 the world. That it has been returned is not enough ; the
compact of the shades has perished. I myself have seen him scat-
 tering the gloom of the infernal deep, and hurling to his father
 plunder from his vanquished brother god. Why did he not drag
 out the king himself, of equal power with Jove, subdued and
 bound with chains, and seizing captured Erebus unbar the Styx ?
 An exit for the shades has been laid open from the deepest cavern,
 and the secrets of dread Death are brought to light. And now,
 the prison of the shades unbarred, he fiercely triumphs over
 me, and with a haughty hand he drags the dismal dog through
 Grecian cities. I have seen the day retire, and the sun shake with
 fear at sight of Cerberus : a trembling has come over me, and look-
 ing on the conquered monster's triple necks, I scarce have dared im-
 pose my orders. But I make too light complaints ; for heaven
has cause to fear, that he, who has subdued the lower world, will
also get possession of the upper. He will not ascend to heaven,

like Bacchus, in a quiet way, but he will strew his path with ruin, and will wish to rule an empty world. He boasts of his tried strength ; and by supporting heaven he has learned his power to wage successful war against it ; he has placed his head beneath its pillars, and the weight of the enormous mass bent not his shoulders : heaven's center rested on the neck of Hercules. He bore the burden, which the stars, and heaven, and I heaped on him, unsubdued. He seeks a way to heaven. Go, Revenge, go, thwart his monstrous plots ! Rush upon him ! Tear him in pieces with thy hands ! [*To herself.*] Why vent such hate ? Let wild beasts go, and let Eurystheus, wearied with commanding, rest. Release the Titans, daring to oppose the power of Jove. Open the cave of the Sicilian peak and let the Doric island, quaking with the outstretched giant, loose the neck of the terrific monster, bound beneath it. Let the lofty Moon bring forth new beasts. But he has conquered these. Seekest Alcides' equal ? There is none besides himself. Let him now fight against himself. Let Furies, summoned from the lowest depths of Tartarus, attend him : let their blazing locks strew fire upon him : let their savage hands inflict the snaky blows. [*To Hercules.*] Now go, thou boaster : seek the temples of the sky ! Despise the things of earth ! Dost thou believe, O Inso-
lence, that thou hast even now escaped the Styx and the abode of Death ? I'll here show the infernals to thee. I'll call up the goddess Discord, hid in darkness dense beyond the place of exile of the wicked shades, whom a huge cavern in the mountain opposite protects. I'll bring her forth, and what remains behind I'll bring from Pluto's lowest realm. Let hateful Crime come up, and fierce Impiety licking his blood, and Madness, and wild Phrenzy, always armed against himself. This, this accomplice shall my vengeance use. Begin, ye slaves of Pluto ! Rouse, and shake the burning pine, and let Megæra lead the troop equipped with frightful scorpions, and with cruel hand snatch from the blazing pile the wasted beam ! Do it ! Have vengeance for the profanation of the Styx ! Let fiercer fires than rage in Ætna's caverns burn his soul ! That Hercules delirious may be driven on with frantic violence, I first must rave. Juno, why dost thou not now rave ? O look on me, ye Fates, on me first maddened ! Tell me if I am contriving plots unworthy of his father's wife ! Now let my hate be changed to rage ! Let him returning see his children safe, I pray,

and may he come with lusty arm ! I've found a day, in which the hated strength of Hercules shall be my pleasure : let him be his own, as he has been my victor : let him long to die, though just returned from the infernal pit ! Here let it profit me that he is son of Jove ! I'll stand near by, and that his arrows go from an unerring string I'll stay his hand. I'll guide the darts of raging Hercules, and now at last I'll favor him in battle. When the deed is done, his father may admit those hands to heaven. Now the contest shall begin : the day dawns, and the bright sun rises in the saffron East, [*Exit.*]

SCENE SECOND.

CHORUS.

Now, only here and there, the stars shine dimly in the western sky. Night, driven back by the returning Day, withdraws her roving fires. Lucifer chases off the twinkling host : the seven-starred Arcadian Bear, a lofty constellation in the northern heavens, greets the morning with the Wain reversed. Already Titan, borne aloft by his celestial steeds, looks down on Ceta's heights ; and now the thickets, famed by the Cadmean Bacchantes, sparkle, sprinkled with the light ; and Phoebus' sister vanishes but to return again. Hard toil begins and wakes the cares of men, and opes their homes. The herdsmen graze their flocks, turned out upon the pasture white with the cold frost. The hornless calf sports freely in the open meadow, and his dam replenishes her just drained teats. The wanton kid strolls on the tender grass capriciously. The nightingale sits warbling on the topmost branch, and joys, surrounded by her chirping young, to spread her plumage to the rising sun ; and the surrounding birdlings greet the day with their united voices. The precarious sailor spreads the sails before the winds, which fill the dangling folds : the angler, sitting on a beetling rock, prepares his tempting hook, or leaning forward eyes his prey with his right hand pulled down : he feels the jerking fish upon the line. Such is the peaceful life of those, who live in calm retirement, and enjoy a home contented with its little portion and a prospect of subsistence from their fields. But anxious cares and trembling fears

roam through the city in an endless throng. One, sleepless, watches at the haughty gates and portals inaccessible of royal palaces. Another heaps up treasure, gazing on his wealth with infinite delight, and yet is poor among his hoarded gold : the favor of the people takes another by surprise, and the rude populace, inconstant as the wave, raise him inflated as with empty air : another meanly bargains for the noisy Forum's brawls, and lets his angry threats for hire. But few know calm repose, who, mindful of the swift-winged years, enjoy returnless scenes. Be joyful while the Fates permit : life hastens in its rapid course, and with the flying day, the rapid year revolves. The stubborn Sisters do their work, and roll not back their threads. The family of man are borne to meet the unrelenting Fates, uncertain of their destiny ; and of our own accord we seek the Stygian waves. With too brave soul, O Hercules, thou dost make haste to see the joyless world. The Fates exact their strict demands : if they command to go, no one has power to stay, nor can a man put off the day decreed. The urn receives the summoned nations. Let renowned bear one through every land, and bubbling fame resound his praise in every city, and exalt him to the starry skies : another go aloft in his triumphal chariot : let my own land conceal me in a safe and secret home. Hoary old age creeps on the slothful ; and the safe but meager fortune of a little house awaits them in a humble place : aspiring valor falls from lofty heights. But Megara approaches, sad, and with dishevelled hair, attended by a few companions, and the sire of Hercules walks slow with age. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT SECOND.

SCENE FIRST.

MEGARA, AMPHITRYON.

MEG.—O thou great ruler of Olympus, judge of heaven, now at length grant respite from his grievous troubles, and an end to slaughter ! No day ever shone upon me but beset with care : the end of one calamity is the beginning of the next : another enemy's forthwith prepared for his return : before he reaches his rejoicing home, he goes commanded to another war. Nor is there

Any other time for rest allowed, than while he is receiving his commands. Juno has chased him from his very birth : was even infancy exempt ? He conquered monsters ere he knew their names : the crested snakes approached him with their double mouths, the infant crept to meet them : looking on the serpents' fiery eyes with calm and placid countenance, endured their pressing coils with careless air, and crushing with his tender hand their swelling throats, he practiced for the Hydra. The swift Hind of Mænalus, with golden horns, was overtaken in the chase. Nemea's greatest dread, the Lion, groaned beneath the stifling grasp of Hercules. Why need I cite the filthy stables of the herd of Diomedes, and the king he gave the royal steeds for feed ; and why the bristly Boar of Mænalus, in the dense woods of Erymanthus, went to shake Arcadia's groves ; and why the Bull, the terror of a hundred tribes ? Among the distant flocks of the Hesperian nation, Geryon, the triple-bodied herdsman of the Spanish shore, was slain : his herd, as booty, driven from the farthest West. Cithæron fed the herd, he grazed upon the Ocean's shore. When bade to penetrate the regions of the torrid sun, and those parched realms, which noon-day burns, he thrust to either side the mountains, tore away the barrier, and made a passage for the rushing ocean. Afterward he made a sally on the Gardens of the fruitful grove, and bore away the booty from the serpent guardian. Aye, and did he not at last by fire defeat the fierce Lernean beast of many heads, and teach him how to die ? Did he not drag the dire Stympalian birds, which often shut the light of day out with their spreading wings, down from the very clouds ? The maiden queen, who rules the Thermodoutian race, subdued him not, who never stained his virtuous bed ; nor did the labor of the famed Augean stables shun his hands prepared for every bold attempt. Of what avail have these things been ? He's gone from the defended world. Earth feels the absence of the author of her peace. Successful crime is deemed but righteousness : the good are subject to the wicked : justice yields to force, and fear suppresses law. I have seen sons, the rightful claimants of a father's throne, struck down with murderous hand before my eyes, and noble Cadmus' very last descendant slain. I've seen the head and kingly crown together crushed. O, who has tears enough for Thebes ? O Thebes, birth-place of many gods, what tyrant dost thou fear ? The land from whose rich glebe and fruitful bosom sprang a band of youth,

with sword up-drawn, whose walls Amphion, Jove-begotten built, of rocks led thither by melodious music : to whose city Jove has come from heaven, which has entertained the gods and borne them sons, and (may the thought be right,) perchance will bear them more, is held in slavish bonds. O race of Cadmus, O Amphion's state how hast thou fallen ! Dost thou crouch before a coward exile, who escaping from his banishment afflicts thee with his presence ? He, who chases monsters over land and sea, and breaks in pieces cruel sceptres with a righteous hand, now absent is a slave and he himself endures what he has rescued others from ; and banished Lycus holds the sway of Thebes, the land of Hercules. He shall not hold it long : he'll rise and seek revenge, and quick will make his home among the stars : he'll find, or make a way. Come safely, and return, I pray, and come at length, a victor, to thy conquered home. Come forth, my husband, and break through the darkness scattered by thy hand ! If there is no returning passage, and the way is shut, now rend the earth, and come, and bring with thee whatever lies enshrouded in the gloom of night. As once between the sundered mountains thou didst make a headlong passage for the rapid stream, when Tempe cleft by the strong blow lay open : smitten by thy might the mountains here and there fell down, and the opposing piles were thrust aside, Peneus ran in an unwonted course ; so now burst forth and seek thy parents and thy children and thy native land, and bring the guard of the infernal gate with thee ; and bring to light what greedy time has hid so long from view ; and drive the nations long forgetful of themselves and unaccustomed to the light of day before thee. If thou bringest only what has been commanded thee, the booty is unworthy thee. But I, uncertain of my fate, demand too great exploits, When shall I see that day, in which I shall embrace thee, and when shall I clasp thy hand ? when will my long complaints persuade thy slow return unmindful of me ? Ruler of the gods, to thee a hundred bulls shall bring their unyoked necks : to thee I will perform the secrets rites, O goddess of the harvest ; and to thee with silent faith mysterious Eleusin shall send up high-reaching flames. Then I'll believe my brothers' life is given back, and that my father lives again and rules his former realm. If any greater power than thine retains thee bound below, we follow. Either do thou safely save us all by thy return, or take us all to thee ! Thou shalt receive us, and no other god shall lift again the broken down.

AMPH.—My daughter, who dost keep with chaste fidelity the bed and sons of the great-minded Hercules, turn now thy mind to better thoughts, and rouse thy courage. He will soon be present nobler, as he always is from his exploits.

MEG.—What mortals too unhappy wish, they readily believe will come to pass.

AMPH.—True, what they fear too greatly, they believe can never be averted nor endured. An expectation of misfortune always leads to fear.

MEG.—Submerged and buried and weighed down by all the earth upon him, how can he ascend to us?

AMPH.—As well as then, when through the burning regions, and the desert sands, which billow like the rolling sea, he crossed the twice receding and returning flood; and when from his abandoned ship, stuck fast with grounded keel upon the shoals of Syrtis, made his way on foot across the sea.

MEG.—A hostile Fate spares not the greatest virtue. No one safely can expose himself to dangers so incessant long. Misfortune will at some time find the victim, which she often has passed by. But see! that savage Lyeus comes with threats upon his countenance, and waving in his hand another's sceptre, walks with such a gait as best befits his guilty soul, [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE SECOND.

LYCUS, MEGARA, AMPHITRYON.

LYC.—[*alone.*] I am king of the opulent land of Thebes and all, that the winding boundary of Phocis surrounds with luxuriant soil, and Ismenus laves, and Cithæron can see from his loftiest peak, and the narrow Isthmus dividing the seas overlooks: not a lazy heir, do I hold the old titles, a father has left me: I have not my birth from a royal line, nor a family known by a name of renown, but illustrious valor is mine. He, who boasts his descent, gives another the praise. But a sceptre usurped is retained with a tremulous hand: every hope of prosperity lies in the sword: what thou knowest thou holdest against the popular will, the fear of thy sword maintains. A seat on another's throne is insecure; but Megara,

joined in royal marriage with me, alone can establish my power. My humble rank shall derive support from her illustrious line. In truth, I do not think she will reject and spurn my bed ; but, if she should with headstrong will refuse, I am resolved to wholly crush the house of Hercules. Will hatred and my subjects tongues repay the deed ? Power to withstand such hatred is the ruler's highest art. I then will try : chance gives me opportunity ; for now she stands before the shrine of the protecting gods, her head invested with mourning veil, and Hercules' true father clinging at her side. [*Advances towards them.*]

MEG.—What new device does he, the pest and bane of Thebes, prepare ? What does he plot ?

LYC.—[*Approaching: to Megara.*] O thou, who drawest an illustrious name from royal line, receive my words awhile with patient ear. If hate unending always harass us, and if hostility begun will never cease, but conquerors retain their arms, the conquered still revolt, then nothing will survive the feud : the earth will lie in wasted fields : the ashes of our burning homes will cover deep the buried nations. It is for the victor's interest to seek return of peace : the vanquished must. Come, share my throne : be thou my queen : receive this pledge of faith : accept my hand. Why art thou silent with that sullen look ?

MEG.—I touch the hand polluted by my father's slaughter and the blood of brothers ? Sooner shall the East withdraw the day, the West proclaim the morning : sooner shall there be a firm alliance of the snows and flames, and Scylla join the shore of Sicily to the Italian coast ; and sooner shall the swift Euripus, with its heavy sweeping tide, stand still in the Eubœan gulf. Thou hast bereaved me of my father, kingdom, brothers, home, and native land : what more have I ? One thing I have, more dear than father, brother, realm and home, the hate of thee, which I am grieved to share with all our state. How small a part of it is mine ! Rule now, thou boaster ! Bear a haughty spirit ! The avenging goddess fast pursues the proud. I know the spirit of the Theban realm. Why need I name those mothers, what they suffered, or what crimes they dared commit ! Why tell the two-fold tragedy, the mingled name of husband, father, son ; or why recall the two opposing armies of the rival brothers, and the pyres of equal number ? Niobe, the boasting mother, stiffened in her anguish weeps, a mournful rock in Phrygian Sipylus. And Cadmus too himself,

with horrid crest upon his head, passed through Illyria in flight and left behind long traces of his trailing body. These examples are before thee. Rule, thou tyrant, as thou wilt, until the wonted fortunes of our state shall call thee to account.

LYC.—Come, madcap, lay aside those angry words, and learn from Hercules to hear what kings command. Although I wield a stolen sceptre with victorious hand, and rule the state without restraint of law, which arms supplant, I'll speak a word in my defense. Thy father fell in bloody war? And are thy brothers slain? Remember, arms do not preserve their moderation; and the vengeance of the once drawn sword can not be easily restrained; and war delights in blood. It's true he fought to shield his kingdom, I impelled by wicked envy; but we seek the issue, not the cause of war: let all remembrance of it perish. When the victor lays his arms aside, the conquerer ought to banish animosity. I do not ask that thou, with bended knee, shouldst worship me, thy king; but this I ask, that thou endure thy fall with noble spirit. Thou art worthy of a royal husband: be my queen.

MEG.—A thrill runs through my bloodless limbs. What deed has fallen on my ear? When peace was ruptured, and the din of war resounded round the walls, I did not fear: I bore it all without alarm: the thought of marriage makes me quake. I seem a slave. Let chains weigh down my body, and let craving hunger lengthen out my weary life: no power shall subdue my faithfulness to thee: I die, but thine, O Hercules.

LYC.—And does thy husband, buried in the depths of the infernal regions, make thee brave?

MEG.—He touched infernal depths that he might reach supernal heights

LYC.—The weight of all the giant earth subdues his strength.

MEG.—No burden can subdue that power, which has upborne the sky.

LYC.—Thou wilt be forced.

MEG.—He knows not how to die, who yields to force.

LYC.—But speak, what better royal gift than marriage can I offer thee?

MEG.—Thy death or mine.

LYC.—In haste to die, thou silly thing?

MEG.—I'll go to meet my husband.

LYC.—Is that slave of thine a better portion than my throne?

MEG.—How many tyrants has “that slave” consigned to death?

LYC.—Why then does he obey a tyrant, and endure a yoke?

MEG.—Take harsh commands away, and what will valor be?

LYC.—Dost thou suppose it valor to withstand wild beasts and monsters?

MEG.—It’s the part of valor to subdue what all men fear.

LYC.—The night of Tartarus immures him boasting of his great exploits.

MEG.—From earth there is no easy passage to the stars.

LYC.—Begotten by what father, does he hope to reach the palaces of heaven?

AMPH.—Unhappy wife of noble Hercules, say not: to me belongs the task to show his parentage and true descent. [*To Lycus*] When he has done so many deeds of never-dying fame, and all, the rising and the setting sun surveys, has been reduced to peace by his right hand, so many monsters vanquished, Phlegra drenched with impious blood, and gods defended from their foes, is not his father proved? Do we feign Jove? Trust Juno’s hate.

LYC.—Why wrong the king of heaven? The mortal race cannot be linked with Jove.

AMPH.—But this has been the common origin of many other gods.

LYC.—Had they been slaves, and after, gods?

AMPH.—The Delian shepherd grazed the flocks of Pheræ.

LYC.—But he did not wander over all the earth in banishment.

AMPH.—His fleeing mother gave him birth upon a floating island.

LYC.—But Apollo feared not monsters, neither savage beasts.

AMPH.—The serpent Python was the first, to stain Apollo’s darts.

LYC.—Dost thou not know how grievous ills befell the infant Hercules?

AMPH.—A thunderbolt hurled Bacchus from his mother’s womb, and soon he stood inferior only to his thundering father. What? And did not he, who guides the stars, and puts the clouds to flight, lie hid, an infant, in the cave on Ida’s steeps? The benefit of so illustrious descent is thick beset with anxious cares, but it is always thought to be of greatest worth, to be by birth a god.

LYC.—Thou knowest him a man, whom thou hast seen unfortunate.

AMPH.—Thou knowest he is not unfortunate, whom thou hast seen courageous

LYC.—Can we call that man courageous, from whose shoulders lion-skin and club have fallen, and been made a present to his mistress, and whose body glitters with Sidonian robes? Is that man brave, whose shaggy hair is soft with nard, and who has moved his hands, so often praised, to the unmanly music of the timbrel, and adorned his fearless brow with the barbarian turban?

AMPIL.—Youthful Bacchus does not blush to loose his flowing hair and wave the slender Thyrsus, when with giddy step he trails his robe adorned with foreign gold. And after many weary labors valor is accustomed to relax.

LYC.—The desolated house of Teuthras and the band of virgins, driven like a herd, confess thy truthfulness. No Juno, nor Eurystheus ordered this; but this he did alone.

AMPIL.—Thou dost not know of all his deeds. By his own weapons Eryx was defeated: next to him Antæus fell, the Libyan giant, and the hearths, which clotted with the gore of strangers, justly drank Busiris' blood. And Cygnus met his sword and, though of vigorous strength, succumbed to death, and triple Geryon was conquered by his single hand; and thou wilt be among the number, but thou'lt be of those, whose beds defilement hath not stained.

LYC.—That is allowed a king, which Jove may have: thou gavest him a wife: thou wilt allow a king the same. And let thy daughter learn this well-established truth of thee, and from her husband, who has proved it so, that it is better to obey a king. But, if she still with headstrong pertinacity refuse, I'll force her, and beget a noble heir.

MEG.—O shade of Creon, O ye gods of Labdacus, and nuptial torches of the impious Œdipus, O grant to me your wonted fates! Now, now, ye fiendish daughters of Egyptian Danaus, come hither with your blood-stained hands! One daughter's wanting to the number: I'll complete the tragedy.

LYC.—Since thou so wilfully dost scorn my bed, and threat thy king, thou soon shalt know what sceptres can perform. Embrace the altars: now no god shall snatch thee from me: not if Hercules could be uplifted from the ruptured earth among the gods above. [*To slaves.*] Heap up the forests, let the temples burn, and fall upon their suppliants, and let one blazing pile consume that wife and all her train.

AMPIL.—I ask this boon of thee, which it is fitting that the sire of Hercules should ask, let me be first to die.

LYC.—Who orders all the expiate their crimes by death, knows not the tyrant's art. Make different requests: bid the unhappy live, command the fortunate to death. But while the pile is swelling with the trees, which wait the flames, I will propitiate the sea-god with the promised offering.

ΑΜΡΗ.—O highest power of heaven, ruler and progenitor of gods, whose weapons shake the earth, restrain this savage king's nefarious hand! O why do I entreat the gods in vain? Wherever, O my son, thou art, O hear! Why do the temples totter, heaving with a sudden violence? Why groans the earth? A heavy crash resounds from out the lowest depths. We're heard: it is, it is the thundering tread of Hercules. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE THIRD.

CHORUS.

O Fortune unpropitious to the brave, how mean rewards thou dost bestow upon the good! Eurystheus is allowed to reign in easy luxury: Alcmena's son must raise his heaven-supporting hand in constant war with savage beasts, and cut the serpent's fertile necks, and bear away the Apples from the cheated Sisters, while the dragon, guardian of the golden fruit, has given his ever-watchful eyelids sleep. He has explored the roving homes of Scythia, and visited the nations, strangers in their own ancestral seats; and he has trod the stiffened surface of the deep, and walked the noiseless sea with silent shore. There the cold waters are devoid of waves; and where before the ships unfurled their swelling sails, unshorn Sarmatians tread. The yearly alternations fit the sea to float the ship and bear the horseman's weight. There she, who, binding round her loins the golden girdle, rules the maiden nation, from her body stripped the royal spoil, and shield, and bands from off her snowy breast, with bended knee submitting to her conqueror. By what hope urged adown the steep of the infernal regions, durst thou venture on the road, which offers no return, and haste to see the realms of Sicily's Proserpine? No South or West wind there lifts up the seas in swelling waves: the twin Tyndaridæ not there assist the timid ships: the sluggish waters stand in gloomy caves; and when pale

Death with greedy jaws bears on the countless nations to the shades, one oarsman ferries them across. Would that thou mightst resist the laws of the relentless Styx, and break the sure decrees of Fate. The king, who rules so many nations, when thou didst attack old Nestor's realm, opposed his baneful hands to thee with triple-pointed spear, but wounded fled, and he, the god of death, was sore afraid to die. By thy right hand break down the bars of Fate, and let the light of day shine through upon the gloomy regions of the shades, and let the guarded gates afford an easy access to the upper world. Orpheus appeased the unrelenting masters of the shades with music and with suppliant prayer, while he regained his lost Eurydice. The art, which had before drawn trees and birds and stones along, had given rivers rest, and at the sound of which wild beasts had stood in wonder, now beguiles the shades with its unwonted music, and resounds more loudly in those silent caves. The Thracian women weep Eurydice, the tearless gods bewail her fate, and judges, who with sternest brow examine charges and inspect old criminals, lament Eurydice. At length the arbiter of death exclaims "I yield : go to the upper world ; but this condition I impose : go thou, a follower, at thy husband's back : look thou not back upon thy wife, until the light of day discloses heaven to thee, and thou art at the gates of Spartan Tanarus." True love dislikes, nor will endure delay. His haste to see his gift deprived him of it. Force can conquer kingdoms, music hath subdæd. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT THIRD.

SCENE FIRST.

HERCULES.

O genial god of light, and glory of the sky, who in thy beaming chariot coursing the alternate spaces dost reveal thy lustrous head to the rejoicing earth, O Phœbus, pardon, if thine eyes have aught of ill beheld : obedient to command, I brought the secret things of hell to light ; and thou, O arbiter, and father of the gods, withdraw thy face by interposing thunderbolts ; and thou, who reignest

on the sea with power next to Jove, dive to its lowest depths! Whoever from on high looks down upon the earth and fears defilement from the strange appearances, let him avert his sight and lift his eyes to heaven and look not on these monstrous deeds. Let her, who gave command, and him, who consummated it, alone behold the crime. The earth is too contracted for my punishments and labors : driven by Juno's hate, I have explored the regions hitherto unseen by man, unknown to Phœbus, and those gloomy spaces, which the lower world assigned to Pluto ; and I might have had the third-allotted empire, had it been my choice. The chaos of eternal night and something far more dread than night and hell's stern masters I have conquered and returned in scorn of death. What more remains ? I have beheld, and shown the shades. If there is more, command. Why dost thou let my hands so long be unemployed ? What victory dost thou enjoin ? Why do these hostile soldiers hold the temples, and the dread of arms invest the sacred porch ?

SCENE SECOND.

AMPHITRYON, MEGARA, HERCULES, THESEUS.

AMPH.—Does my desire delude my sight, or has that brave subduer of the world and pride of Greece ascended from the silent place of dismal gloom ? Is this my son ? My limbs are numb with joy. My son, thou art our sure defence, and Thebes' last refuge ! Do I see him lifted to the earth, or do I, cheated, feast my eyes upon an empty shade ? And art thou he ? I know thy arms and shoulders and thy noble hand, that wields thy heavy club.

HERC.—My father, whence this mourning ? Wherefore has my wife put on a mourning garb ? Why are my sons bedaubed with filth so foul ? What grief weighs down my house ?

AMPH.—Creon is slain ; and Lycus has usurped the throne : thy sons, thy father and thy wife he seeks for death.

HERC.—Ungrateful earth ! Has no one come, assistance to the house of Hercules ? Has the defended world beheld the monstrous crime ? Why waste the day with my complaints ? The villain must be slain !

THES.—Must virtue bear this brand, and Lycus be the strongest foe of Hercules? I go to spill his hostile blood.

HERC.—Hold, Theseus, lest some sudden power oppress thee! Fighting calls for me. Put off thy greetings, father: hence with thy embrace, my wife: Lycus must bear to Pluto news of my return. [*Exit Herc.*]

THES.—Put off thy weeping countenance, O queen, and thou, Amphitryon, repress thy falling tears: thy son is safe. If I know Hercules, that Lycus will give due redress for Creon's death. Will give is slow: he gives: this too is slow: he has already paid the penalty.

AMPH.—And may whatever god has power assist our prayer and aid our falling state. O brave companion of my noble son, recount the line of his exploits, how long a way leads to the joyless shades, how the Tartarean dog endured his grievous chains.

THES.—Thou urgest me to tell of deeds, which even oae of quiet mind would shudder at. I hitherto have scarcely had assurance of the vital air: my sight is dim and hardly can my heavy eyes endure the unaccustomed light of day.

AMPH.—What fear is treasured in thy noble soul subdued, O Theseus, nor deny thyself the best enjoyment of thy toils. The memory is sweet of what was hard to bear: relate the dread events.

THES.—I pray all gods of hell, both thee, who rulest in the broad domain, and thee, for whom thy mother vainly sought through all the woods of Ætna, that I may without offense unfold the secret laws concealed beneath the earth. The Spartan land lifts up a lofty mountain where the crowded woods of Tænarus approach and overhang the sea: the home of hated Pluto here unfolds its mouth and a deep cavern yawns and a huge chasm with monstrous gulf reveals its vast abyss and gives a broad descent to all mankind. The way begins at first not dark with gloom: the brightness of the day just left behind and the uncertain glimmer of the disappearing sun falls on and cheats the sight: thus day with night commingled sheds its morning and its evening light. The roomy entrance here expands in wide and vacant chambers, lost in which the race of man entire might disappear. Nor is it difficult to go: the very path impels its victims down. As often tides drag on unwilling ships, so here the headlong wind and greedy chaos push along, nor ever does the greedy realm permit a mortal to retrace his steps. Within, along its placid bed of

fast extent, the quiet Lethe glides and soothes their anxious cares; and, lest there be a better chance of exit, bends its sluggish stream in many windings: as the wandering Mæander sports with its inconstant current and rests back upon itself and stands in doubt, which way to flow, or onward to the sea, or backward to its source. The slow Cocytus rests in marshy filth. The vulture here, and there the mournful owl and the foreboding screech-owl cry. Dark foliage frowns with dismal look upon an overhanging yew-tree: where sit sluggish Sleep, and doleful Famine prostrate and with wasted jaw; and Shame too late conceals her conscious face; and Fear and Terror, Death and gnashing Pain and dark Despair and tottering Disease and War with sword begirded follow in the train; and hidden in the farthest recess weary Age supports his steps upon his staff.

AMPH.—Is there no land producing grain and wine?

THES.—No joyful meadows grow with verdant breast, no full grown corn-fields wave with gentle breezes, nor has any tree a fruitful branch: the barren waste of heavy soil lies in neglect, and the uncared-for land is rigid with eternal fallowness: the farthest mournful boundary of earthly things is here. The air stands still, and gloomy night broods over all the sluggish world. All things are dark with gloom, and worse than death itself is the abode of death.

AMPH.—On what throne seated does the king of those dark places rule the shades?

THES.—Within a dark recess of Tartarus there is a place, which heavy clouds invest with thickened darkness: here two streams flow from a single source: the sacred Styx, by which the gods take oath, a quiet river, glides with noiseless motion: Acheron with current irresistible is hurried madly on with rapid violence, and with its flood drags rocks along. By these two streams the realm of Pluto opposite is circled, and the roomy home is sheltered by a shady grove: here, in a cave of vast extent, the threshold of the tyrant lies: this is the way the shades must go: this is the entrance of the kingdom, which a plain surrounds, where sitting with a haughty look he separates the souls, as they arrive. An awe-inspiring majesty and frowning aspect mark the god, which notwithstanding bears resemblance to his brother's, and reveals his high descent: he has the face of Jove, but of the Thunderer. No little part of the stern kingdom is the king him-

self, by whose appearance even horrid shades are struck with terror.

AMPH.—Is the story true that justice is so late awarded and that wicked souls forgetful of their crimes receive due punishment? Who is this judge of right and arbiter of justice?

THES.—More than one examiner sit on their lofty seats allotting to the trembling criminals their late awards: in one court-room they come before the Cretan Minos, in another Rhadamantus: in another Æacus examines them. What each has done he suffers for: the crime seeks out its perpetrator, who is punished as his acts demand. I have seen cruel rulers shut in prison, and the backs of helpless tyrants flogged by subjects' hands; but he, who gently uses power, and having power of life and death preserves his hands unstained and mildly rules his bloodless realm and wastes not life, a long time travels through the lingering spaces of a blest existence, and is borne to heaven, or rejoicing to the happy homes of the Elysian grove, and there is made a judge. O ye, who rule refrain from blood: your crimes are punished with severer penalties.

AMPH.—Does a sure place enclose the wicked souls confined and, as the story says, do cruel torments vex them in perpetual bonds?

THES.—Ixion, tortured on a swiftly turning wheel, is dragged around: a heavy rock rests on the neck of Sisyphus: the old man, Tantalus, stands in the river and with thirsty jaws pursues the waves: they wash his chin; and now when it has roused his oft-deluded hope the water vanishes, when in his mouth: the fruits elude his hunger: Tityos affords the vulture constant food: the daughters of Egyptian Danaus bear vessels filled in vain; and Cadmus' wicked daughters wander raving; and the greedy Harpy spoils the food of Phineas.

AMPH.—Relate the famous battle of my son. Does he bear back a gift his willing uncle gave, or spoil?

THES.—A gloomy rock impends above the quiet river, where the surges stiffen, and the sluggish waters lie in torpid sleep: a foul old man of horrid dress and aspect here waits at the stream and bears the trembling shades across: his beard hangs down uncombed, a knot confines his robe in ugly folds, his sunken eyes glare with a lurid look. With a long pole this ferryman directs his boat. He binds his bark late emptied of its burden to the shore and seeks another load of shades; but Hercules demands a

passage and the crowd give way. Dread Charon cries out "Whither dost thou go, audacious mortal? Stay thy hasty step!" Alcmena's son enduring no delay subdued the boatman, beat him with his pole and leaped upon the stern. The over-laden boat for nations ample sunk beneath the weight of one, and drank on either hand the Lethe in with dipping sides. The conquered monsters quake with fear, the savage Centaurs and the Lapithæ aroused to battle by excess of wine. Then crouching in the farthest corner of the Stygian pool the savage beast of Lerne hides his reproducing heads. Beyond the home of greedy Pluto lies : here the ferocious Stygian dog affrights the shades, which clapping his three heads together with terrific noise keeps guard before the realm : snakes lick his head besmeared with gore, his mane is terrible with serpents, and the long-drawn dragon hisses with his twirling tail: his rage is like his form. When he perceives the moving of the feet of Hercules, he lifts his foretop bristling with the shaken serpents and receives the sound with eager ear, accustomed to detect the motions even of the shades. But when the son of Jove came nearer, scarcely knowing where to turn, the dog crouched in a cave, and both were filled with fear. But lo! he rouses up those silent places with his boisterous barking and the serpents hiss on all his shoulders and the roaring of his dreadful voice sent from his triple mouth makes even happy souls afraid. Then Hercules unloosed the lion skin from his left hand, held the Nemæan head before himself, and screened himself behind the strong defense : in his victorious hand he wields the heavy club, now here, now there, with tireless strength repeats his blows : the conquered dog suppressed his threats, and wearied out hung down his heads and yielded all the cave. Both rulers sitting on their thrones were terror-struck and ordered him an entrance ; and when Hercules required a gift, they gave me up to him. Then stroking with his hand the monster's massive necks he bound him with an adamantine chain. The dog, the ever-watchful guardian of the gloomy realm, forgetful of his wonted fierceness, fearful dropped his ears and let himself be dragged along, and owning him his master followed with submissive look, and lashed his body with his snaky tail. But when we reached the mouth at Tanarus, and when the gleaming of the unaccustomed light fell on his eyes, the prisoner took new courage and with raging shook his ponderous chains: he pushed his victor from

his footing, threw him reeling back and almost carried him away. Then Hercules besought my aid, and we compelled the dog dragged out by our united strength and mad with rage and trying vain resistance to the open world; and when he saw the shining heavens and the lucid spaces of the brilliant sky, he closed his eyes, shut out the hateful light and struggled toward the ground with all his necks, then thrust his head beneath the shadow of Alcides' form. But a close crowd approach with joyful clamor bearing laurel on their brows and sing the well-won praises of the noble Hercules.

SCENE THIRD.

CHORUS.

Eurystheus, born by hastened birth, had ordered him to penetrate the depth of the infernal regions : this alone was wanting to the number of his labors, to despoil the third-allotted empire's king. He dared go in the gloomy entrance, where the weary way and horrid with its blackening groves, but crowded with a thronging multitude, leads to the distant regions of the dead. As great a crowd as rush through cities, eager for the sports of a new theatre: as great as hasten to the shrine of the Olympic Thunderer, as great as throng the secret festival of Ceres, when the Attic priesthood summoned leave their homes and haste to celebrate the night, and when the season of long nights approaching, even-balanced Libra hastening to lengthen out the quiet hours of sleep holds Phoebus' chariot: so great a multitude are driven through those silent plains: some come advancing with a feeble step, weary and sated with proed life ; and some as yet of stronger years come hither, virgins yet unmarried, youths with hair uncut, and infants scarcely taught the name of mother : these are suffered, that they may not fear, to bear a torch and thus relieve the darkness. Others grope on mournful through those gloomy places with such feeling as we have in darkness, when we sadly feel as if the weight of all the earth were pressing on our heads. A wide chaos and filthy darkness and the dismal gloom of night and solitude of the still world are there. May age conduct us thither late ! No one can reach that place too late, whence, when he once has come, he never can re.

turn. Why haste, inexorable Fate? All this vast multitude, who roam on earth, shall thither go and spread their sails upon the slow Coeytus. All things grow for thee, O Death, whatever rising Phœbus, or his setting beams behold; but spare the coming souls! We are prepared for thee: though thou art slow, still we are hurried on. The earliest hour of life begins the work of death.

A day of rejoicing is present to Thebes: let suppliants come to the altars: fat victims be slain; and the brides and the bridegrooms together awaken the festival dance: let the tillers of the grain-covered fields lay aside their hard labor and rest. From the East to the West and where Phœbus looks down from his loftiest hight and refuses our bodies a shadow a peace is established by Hercules' hand; and the land the long winding of ocean encompasses Hercules' power has subdued. He has traversed Tartarean depths, and returned from the conquered infernal domain. Now no terror remains. There is nothing beyond the Tartarean realm. On thy bristling locks, O priest, let delectable poplar be bound. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT FOURTH.

SCENE FIRST.

HERCULES, THESEUS, AMPHITRYON, MEGARA.

HERC.—Lycus, by my avenging right hand slain, has struck the earth with downward face: then, who had been accomplice of the tyrant, fell, companion of his punishment. Now will I bring a sacrifice to Jove and to the other gods, and worship at the altars worthy of the victims slain. Thee, thee, companion and assistant of my labors, I invoke war-loving Pallas, in whose hand the Ægis with its petrifying image sends forth savage threats; and may Lycurgus' victor and the Red Sea's conqueror be present with his spear entwined with verdant vine and ivy; and the twin divinities, Apollo and Diana, skilled, Diana more with arrows and Apollo with the lyre; and may whatever brother dwells in heaven, but Juno's sons, be present. Call the fattened flocks! What India's corn-fields bear and what the Arabs gather from their fragrant trees pile on the altars: let luxurious incense rise. Let poplar branches deck my hair: the olive sacred in thy native

land adorn thee, Theseus. My hand shall adore the Thunderer ; and thou the founders of city and the woody caves of Zethus and the fountain Dirce of delightful water and the Tyrian lares of the stranger king. Give incense to the flames.

AMPH.—My son, first purify thy hands all dripping from the bloody slaughter of the enemy.

HERC.—Would that I might pour to the gods the hateful tyrant's blood. No more acceptable libation could have touched the altars : no more pleasing sacrifice and richer can be offered Jove than unjust kings.

AMPH.—Pray that thy father end thy labors : let repose be sometime given to the wearied.

HERC.—I will offer prayers becoming Jove and me. Let heaven and earth and air stand in their wonted places : let the stars pursue their unobstructed courses : let a peace profound refresh the nations: let the labor of the peaceful country all the steel engross : let swords be sheathed: let no tempestuous storms disturb the sea : no fire leap forth from angry Jove: no river swollen with the wintry snow lay waste the deluged fields: may poisons cease: may no weed grow with noxious sap: may no unjust and cruel tyrant reign. If Earth will sometime bring forth any monster, may it hasten; and if any is preparing, be it mine. [*Becomes mad.*] But what is this? The noon-day is shut in with darkness. Phœbus goes with darkened face without a cloud ! Who is it driving back the day, and who pursues it to the rising? Wherefore does strange night thrust out her darkling head? Whence do so many stars fill up the mid-day sky? Behold! in a conspicuous part of heaven Leo, my first labor, shines and glows all over in his raging and prepares to bite: he'll seize some constellation: threatening with his monstrous mouth he stands and blows out fire and tosses round the mane upon his yellow neck: whatever fruitful Autumn bears and Winter with its icy spaces he'll leap over, at a bound and fall upon and crush the neck of vernal Taurus.

AMPH.—O, what sudden evil's this? Why dost thou turn thy staring face about? Dost thou behold a false sky with a turbid sight?

HERC.—The earth has been subdued, the swelling floods have given way and the infernal regions felt my power: heaven is exempt, a labor worthy Hercules. Let me be borne aloft among

the distant regions of the sky ! Let me direct my course to heaven ! My father promises a seat in heaven : what if he refuse ? The earth cannot bind Hercules, and now at length returns him to the gods above. Behold the whole assemblage of the gods, but Juno, call me thither of their own accord and willingly unfold the doors. Dost thou receive me and unfold the gates, or must I force an entrance to the stubborn heaven ? Is there hesitation ? I will take the chains from Saturn, and will let him loose against the helpless kingdom of my impious father. Let the furious Titans wage their war, and I will lead them on. I'll carry rocks and trees, and with my strong right hand I'll seize the mountains full of Centaurs. Now upon the heaped-up mountains I will make my way to heaven. Let Chiron see his Pelion under Ossa ! And Olympus, lifted to the third degree, shall reach the sky, or shall be thither hurled.

AMPH.—Turn far away those dreadful sights : restrain the raging fury of thy maddened, yet majestic, soul.

HERC.—What's this ? The baleful giants have begun their war. Lo ! Tityos has fled the shades and with his torn and empty breast how near the sky he stands ! Cithæron totters, high Pallene quakes, and Macedonian Tempe trembles. One has seized the heights of Pindus, and another Cæta : Mimas rages horribly. The fiery-haired Erinnys sounds with heavy blows and holds the fire-brands blazing from the pyres nearer and nearer to their faces : stern Tisiphone, with serpent-guarded head, since Cerberus was dragged away, now keeps the open gate with threatening torch. [*He sees his son.*] But see ! the hated tyrant's offspring's hidden there, the execrable seed of Lycus ! This right hand shall send thee to thy impious father ! May my bowstring hurl swift arrows. Thus to go becomes the darts of Hercules.

AMPH.—How far has blinded fury hurled itself ? He bent his massive bow, and when the ends were brought together, let his arrow fly : it whizzes, hurled with force, and passing through the middle of the victim's neck, it leaves the wound behind.

HERC.—I'll root out all the remnant of the race, and all their hiding places. Why delay ? A greater war awaits me at Mycenæ : let the Cyclopean rocks, demolished by my hand, fall down and let the walls be laid in ruins, and the bolts be broken, and the door swing to and fro, the door-posts break, and let the roof be hurled upon the ground. The palace is laid open to my sight : I see a son of the accursed father hidden there. [*Sees another son.*]

AMPH.—Behold! he clasps thy knees with supplicating hand, entreating with a piteous voice! O horrid crime, and sad and terrible to look upon! He seized him by his suppliant hand, and raging, whirled him six times round: his head resounds: the roof is sprinkled with his scattered brain. But now unhappy Megara conceals a little son within her bosom and, distracted, flees her hiding-place.

HERC.—[*To Megara.*] Although thou flee, and hide thyself in Jove's embrace, from whatesover lurking place this hand shall seek and drag thee forth.

AMPH.—O wretched woman, whither dost thou flee? What flight or what concealment dost thou seek? There is no safe retreat from Hercules enraged. But rather clasp his knees, and try to soothe him with caressing prayer.

MEG.—O spare me now I pray, my husband! Know thy Megara! This son reflects thy face and aspect. Dost thou see him stretch his hands to thee?

HERC.—[*Supposing she is Juno.*] I have my father's wife. Go, satisfy my vengeance, and release Jove bound by a disgraceful marriage bond. But let this little monster die before his mother.

MEG.—Whither wilt thou madly go? Wilt thou pour out thy blood?

AMPH.—The infant, frightened by his father's fiery visage, died before the wound: fright snatched his breath away. And now the heavy club is hurled against his wife, and breaks her bones: her head is shattered from her mangled body, nor can any where be found. [*To himself.*] Durst thou, O too long-lived old man, behold this crime? If grief is hard to bear, thou hast a ready death. [*To Hercules.*] Turn now thy darts against my breast; or turn on me that club, which thou hast spattered with the blood of monsters. Put away thy father, false and shameful to thy name, lest he impede thy praise.

THES.—Why rush, old man, to slaughter? Whither dost thou madly go? Flee, hide thyself, and from the hands of Hercules remove one crime.

HERC.—I am content: the shameless tyrant's house is overthrown. I have destroyed this household consecrate to thee, O wife of highest Jove. I willingly have offered prayers becoming thee, O Jupiter; and Argos shall bring other victims.

AMPH.—Thou hast not yet satisfied the gods: complete the sacri-

fice. Behold ! the victim stands before the altars: he awaits thy hand with bended neck: I give myself, I run to meet thee, I pursue thee: slay me! What is this? His eyesight wanders, sadness dims his vision. Do I see Alcides quake? His face hangs down in sleep: his weary neck inclines with lolling head: his knees give way and his whole body falls upon the ground: as ash-trees in the forest felled, or mountain masses fall to form a harbor in the sea. Dost thou still live, or has that rage, which has destroyed thy family, devoted thee to death? 'Tis sleep: his breathing heaves his body with alternate motions. Give him time to rest, in order that his furious violence, subdued by heavy sleep, may ease his wearied breast. Remove his arms, ye slaves, lest in his rage he get them back. [*Exeunt all, but Herc.*]

SCENE SECOND.

CHORUS.

Let heaven mourn, and lofty heaven's exalted father, and the fruitful earth, and the inconstant wave upon the fluctuating sea; and do thou mourn before all others, glowing Titan, who through all the earth and regions of the Ocean scatterest thy beams, and with thy shining face dost put the night to flight. As well as thou, has Hercules beheld the places of thy rising and thy setting, and has traversed both thy homes. Release his mind from such calamity, release it, O ye gods! Avert his mind to better thoughts! And thou, O sleep, subduer of our labors, and refresher of the mind, the better part of human life, swift-winged, Astræa's offspring, languid brother of unyielding death, who minglest truth and lies together, sure, though most ill-boding, prophet of the future, father of all things, haven of life, refresher of the day, companion of the night, who comest to the king and slave alike, O calm and gentle sleep, refresh the wearied Hercules! Thou dost compel the race of man afraid to die to know a lingering death. Oppress him bound in deep unconsciousness! Let torpor rest on his unconquered limbs, nor let it leave his cruel breast, until his former mind resumes its wonted course. Behold he lies upon the ground, revolving savage dreams in his ferocious breast, (the fierce-

ness of his madness has not yet subsided,) and accustomed to recline his weary head upon his heavy weapon, seeks his club with empty hand, and tosses round his arms with useless violence. The angry tumult is not yet subdued, but like the sea, when roused by furious Notus, long continues raging, and although the wind has ceased, it surges still. Quell the wild billows of his soul: let piety and bravery return; or rather let his mind be roused by the insane commotion. Let blind fury cease as it began. Insanity alone can prove thee innocent. The nearest state to innocence is an unconsciousness of crime. Now let his breast resound with blows inflicted by the hand of Hercules: let blows be struck upon those shoulders wont to bear the skies: let heaven hear his heavy groanings, and the queen of the infernal regions, and that Cerberus, whose necks are bound with heavy chains, which crouches in the deepest cave. Let chaos, and the broad expanse of Ocean, and the air, which would more righteously have felt thy darts, reverberate the mournful sound. The breast, beset with sins so grievous, must be struck by no light blow: let the three realms resound his groans. And thou, strong arrow, which hast hung so long, a glory and protection, on his neck, and loaded quiver, beat his savage back with cruel blows; and let the oak bruise his brave shoulders, and the heavy club oppress his breast with cruel knots: his arms must drive away so cruel grief. Ye boys, who, though not sharers of your father's praise, by impious violence have fallen, expiation for the death of kings, not taught to bend your limbs in Grecian wrestling schools, unskilled to use the cæstus and the fist, but who have learned to send the flying arrow from the Scythian quiver, hurled with an unerring hand, to pierce the bounding stag, and to transfix the backs of young wild beasts, go to the havens of the Styx, go shades, go, innocents, whom murder and paternal fury crushed on life's first threshold! Go, unhappy children, through the gloomy place of the renowned exploit! Go, seek the angry gods!—[*Exeunt.*]

ACT FIFTH.

SCENE FIRST.

HERCULES, AMPHITRYON, THESEUS.

HERC.—What place is this, what region, quarter of the world?

Where am I? Near the rising of the sun, or under where the Bear revolves around the frozen pole? Or does the farthest shore of the Hesperian sea impose this limit to the Ocean? What air supplies my breath? What ground's beneath my weary feet? I've certainly returned. Whence do I see these bloody bodies strewn before my house? Or do infernal images still linger in my mind? A ghostly throng hover before my eyes even after my return. I am ashamed of the confession, but I fear I know not what: my mind presages some calamity. Where is my father? Where is my brave wife, and band of children? Why is my left side uncovered by the lion's spoil? Whither has gone my covering, which was the easy couch for Hercules' repose? Where is my bow? Where are my arrows? Who could take from me alive my arms? Who has borne off such spoil? Who has not feared the very sleep of Hercules? Show me my conqueror! Come forth thou brave one, whom thy father coming late from heaven begot, and for whose birth a longer night was given than for mine! What crime do I behold? My sons cut down in bloody slaughter lie around: my wife is slain. What Lycus holds the scepter? Who has dared to plot such crimes at Thebes on Hercules' return? O Ye, who dwell upon the banks of the Ismenus, and the Attic plains, and realms of the Dardanian Pelops lashed by seas on either side, assist! Reveal the author of the cruel slaughter! Let my anger rush on all: he is my enemy, who will not show my enemy? Dost thou, O conqueror of Hercules, lie hid? Come forth! Whether then comest an avenger of the savage Thracian's bloody chariots, or of the herd of Geryon, or of the Libyan kings do not delay the battle. See, I stand unarmed: with my arms even, I permit thee, to attack me stripped of all defence. Wherefore do Theseus and my father flee my sight? Why hide their faces? Wipe away thy tears! O tell me, who consigned my house to death? Why art thou silent, O my father? But do thou, O Theseus, tell me with thy wonted faithfulness! Both hide their

faces, and in secret weep. What calls for shame in such calamities? What! have that head-strong conqueror of Thebes, and Lyeus' hateful troop destroyed my household with such bloody violence? I pray thee, by the glory of my deeds and by thy name's authority propitious always to me, who has killed my family? Whose spoil am I?

AMPH.—Let these misfortunes pass in silence thus.

HERC.—Shall I be unavenged?

AMPH.—Vengeance is often injury.

HERC.—But who has ever quietly endured so great calamities?

AMPH.—He, who has dreaded greater.

HERC.—What, my father, greater or severer can be feared?

AMPH.—How little part thou knowest of thy loss!

HERC.—My father pity me! I stretch my supplicating hands to thee: but why is this? He flees my touch! [*Looking upon his hands.*] Here lies the crime. Whence came this blood! Why drips that arrow with their youthful blood? I see my weapons stained with the Lernaean gore: I do not ask, what hand has hurled them. Who could bend my bow, or what right hand could draw the string, which scarcely yields to me? I turn again to thee, my father, is this crime my deed? They speak not: it is mine.

AMPH.—The grief is thine, the crime belongs to Juno: this disaster lacks a fault.

HERC.—Forgetful of me, O my father, hurl thy angry thunderbolts from all the sky: avenge thy grandsons with at least a tardy hand: let the star-burdened heavens resound and lightnings flash athwart the sky; and let the Caspian rocks stretch out my body bound upon them, and the hungry vulture tear my breast! Why are Prometheus' cliffs unoccupied? Let the precipitous and treeless side of Caucasus, which feeds wild beasts and vultures on its spacious summit, be prepared for me. Let the Symplegades, which narrow down the Scythian Sea, extend upon the deep my hands bound here and there, and when with alternating motion they approaching strike together, dash the intervening water to the sky, there let me lie, a restless barrier between. Why do I not heap up a pile from the collected grove, and burn my body stained with impious blood? Thus, thus I will do: Hercules shall seek the shades.

AMPH.—His mind has not recovered from the wild commotion: he has turned his anger, and as phrenzy is accustomed, rages now against himself.

HERC.—If there exist dread haunts of Furies and a prison of infernals and a habitation for the wicked multitude, and any place of banishment beyond the lower world, unknown to Cerberus and me, conceal me there, O Earth ! The farthest bound of Tartarus shall be my dwelling place. O too unfeeling breast ! O who, my sons, shall worthily lament you strewn through all my home ? My eyes inured to evils know not how to weep. Give me my sword, give me my arrows, bring my heavy club. To you I'll break my weapons : I will break my bow to you, my sons, and to you shades my heavy club shall burn ; my very quiver filled with the Lernæan arrows shall be placed upon your funeral piles : my arms must suffer for their deeds ; and I will burn your wretched bodies also with my darts. O cruel hands !

THESE.—Has ever any one applied the name of crime to madness ?

HERC.—Often grievous madness has obtained the place of crime.

THESE.—There now is need of Hercules : endure this great calamity.

HERC.—My shame has not so ended with my phrensy, that I wish to put to flight all nations with my impious face. My arms, my arms, O Theseus, taken from me, I demand that they be quick returned. If I am sane, return my weapons to my hands : if madness yet remains, my father, leave me : I will find a way of death.

AMPH.—By the religion of our race, by the authority of both my names, whether thou callest me thy foster-father, or thy parent, and by my gray hairs respected by the pious, I beseech thee, spare my lonely age and weary years ! Preserve thyself, the only pillar of our fallen house, the only light to me afflicted with calamities ! No fruit has come from thy exploits : precarious seas or monstrous beasts have been my constant fear : whatever cruel tyrants, noxious with their hands or altars, rage in all the earth I fear. Thy father asks for the enjoyment and companionship of thee, my always absent son.

HERC.—There is no reason, why I longer should detain my spirit in this light, and still delay : I have already lost my every good : my arms, my reputation, wife and sons, my hands : even my madness : none can cleanse my tainted soul : the stain must be removed by death.

AMPH.—And wilt thou kill thy father too ?

HERC.—That I may not, I die.

AMPH.—Before thy father's eyes ?

HERC.—I have taught him to look on crime.

AMPH.—Look rather on thy memorable deeds, and ask forgiveness of thyself for this one fault.

HERC.—Shall he, who never pardoned others, now forgive himself? Commanded, I have done praise-worthy deeds; but this alone is mine. Help me, my father, whether piety, or stubborn Fate, or injured virtue's honor move thee: bring my arms: let Fortune be subdued by my right hand.

THES.—A father's prayers are surely efficacious, but be moved by my entreaty. Rouse thyself and crush these sad misfortunes with thy wonted force! Resume thy mind unequal to no fate! Now thou must act with greatest courage: let not Hercules be furious.

HERC.—If I remain alive, I have committed crimes; but if I die, I have endured. I haste to purge the earth. Just now an impious monster cruel, fierce, and savage hovers in my sight: come on, right hand, begin the monstrous labor more immense than any of thy twelve! Thou coward, art thou brave alone with boys and trembling mothers? If my arms are not returned to me, I will uproot the woods of Thracian Pindus, and the sacred groves of Bacchus, and drag down Cithæron's heights, and burn them with myself; or drag down all the roofs and houses with their masters, and the Theban temples with their gods upon my body, and lie hid beneath the ruins of the city: if the walls cast down should fall, an easy burden, on my stubborn shoulders, and I be too feebly pressed beneath the seven gates, I'll drag upon my head the ponderous mass, which holds the center of the universe and separates the upper from the nether gods.

AMPH.—I will return thy arms.

HERC.—That word is worthy of the sire of Hercules. Behold! this arrow slew my son.

AMPH.—But Juno sent that arrow from thy hand.

HERC.—But I will use it now.

HERC.—See how my heart in dreadful apprehension throbs and beats against my anxious breast!

HERC.—The arrow's chosen,

AMPH.—Now, remember, thou wilt perpetrate a voluntary crime.

HERC.—Speak, what dost thou command?

AMPH.—Nothing: my grief is safe. Thou only canst preserve a son to me, but thou canst not bereave me. I have passed my greatest fear. Thou canst not render me unhappy; happy though

thou canst. Determine what thou dost determine so, that thou may know that thy position and thy reputation stand upon a narrow and unsafe foundation. Either thou wilt live, or kill me too : my spirit, light and weary with old age and broken by misfortune hangs upon thy first reply. Can any one so hesitate to give a father life ? I will endure no more delay : the sword shall pierce my fated breast. Here, here will lie the crime of conscious Hercules.

HERC.—Now spare, my father, spare ! Now stay thy hand ! (*To himself.*) O valor yield ! Obey thy father's voice ! Let this be reckoned also with the deeds of Hercules ! We'll live ! O Theseus, lift my father's limbs bent down upon the ground : my impious hand shrinks from his pious touch.

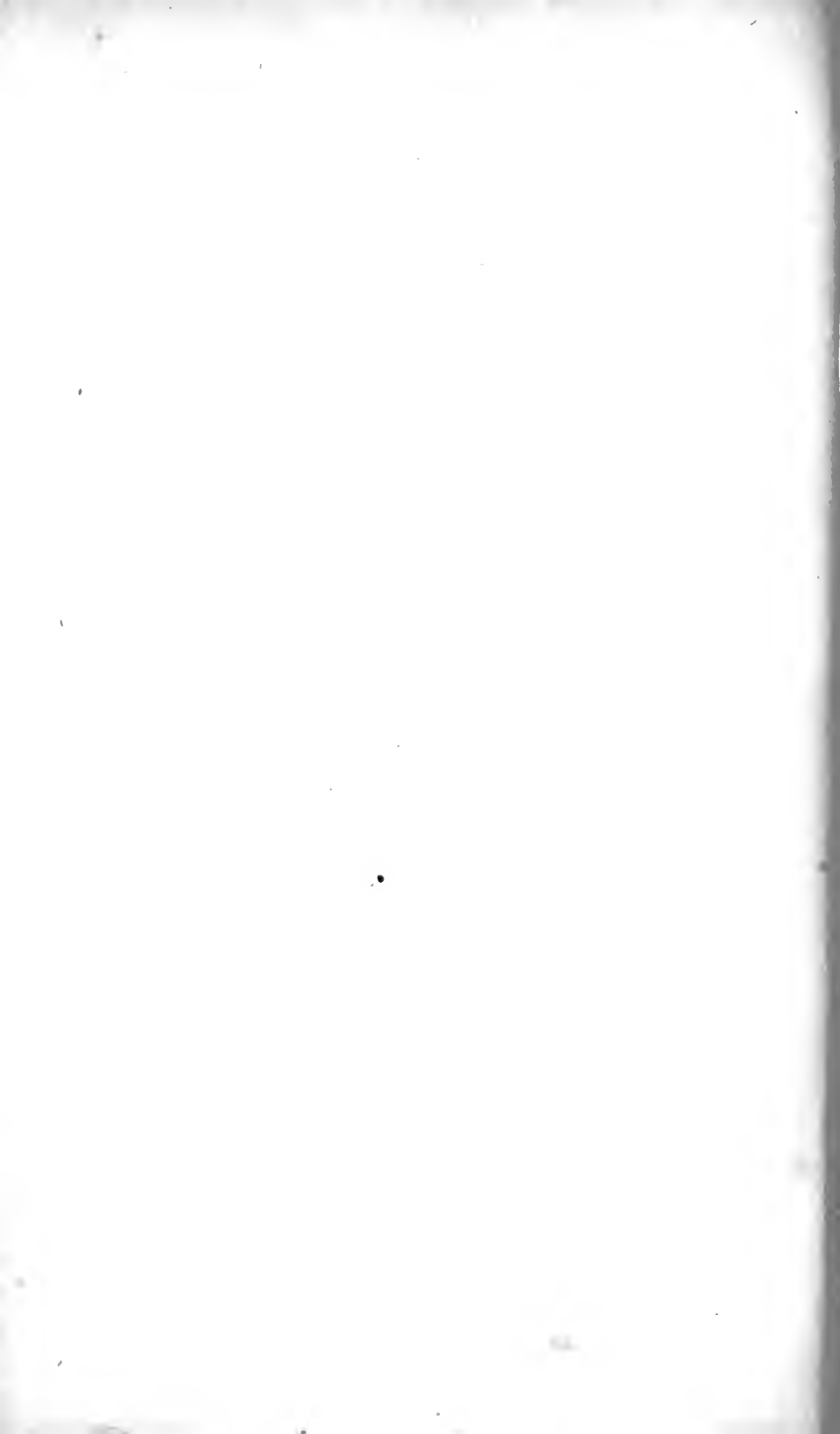
AMPH.—[*Taking the hand of Herc.*] I willingly embrace this hand ; and leaning on it will I go away ; and pressing it upon my weary breast will drive away my grief.

HERC.—What place shall I, an exile, seek ? Where shall I hide myself ? What Tanais, or Nile, or Tigris furious with its Persian wave, impetuous Rhine, or Tagus flowing turbidly with Spanish treasure can make clean my hands ? Although the cold Mæotis should discharge the Northern Sea upon me, and the Ocean flow across my hands, the crime will still adhere. [*To himself.*] Into what lands wilt thou, O 'impious one, retire ? Hast thou the rising or the setting sun for thy retreat ? Known every where, no place of banishment remains. The world avoids me : stars shoot from their wonted courses : Titan looks on Cerberus with more benignant face. O faithful friend, O Theseus, seek some far-off secret hiding-place ; and since so long a judge of others' crimes thou lovest criminals, grant me in turn this favor well-deserved : return me to the shades below, I pray, and bind me with thy chains ! I'll hide me there. But even that has known me.

THES.—Our land waits thee. There shall Mars restore thy hand to arms, acquitted of the crime. That land, O Hercules, which makes gods innocent, invites thee home. [*Exeunt omnes.*]

ERRATA.

- On page 1, for EQNIS, read EQUIS.
 " " 6, line 7 from bottom, for *precarious* read *adventurous*.
 " " 7, " 2 " " for *palaces*. Another read *palaces: another*
 " " 7, " 19 " top, for *bubbling* read *babbling*.
 " " 7 " 25 " " a few companions and the sire of
Hercules walks, read *her little flock, Alcides' father walking*.
 On page 9, line 1 from top, erase comma after *built* and insert
 after *begotten*.
 On page 9, line 14 from bottom, for *commanded thee, the booty is*
unworthy thee, read *commanded, then thy booty is unworthy thee*.
 On page 10, line 22 from top, for *Exuent* read *Exeunt*.
 On page 11, " 5 " " subjects read *subjects'*
 " " 13, " 5 " bottom, " *thought* read *thought*.
 " " 14, " 14 " " *torche sof* " *torches of*.
 " " 15, " 1 " top " *the* " *to*.
 " " 16, " 13 " bottom, " *noisleess* " *noiseless*.
 " " 17, " 21 " top, " *thon* " *thou*.
 " " 18, " 13 " bottom, " *hear* " *here*.
 " " 19, " 2 " " *greedy realm* read *niggard realm*.
 " " 20, " 2 " " *brilliant* " *brilliant*.
 " " 22, " 5 " top, " *pro-ed* " *protracted*.
 " " 23, " 11 " bottom, " *litte* " *little*.
 " " 26, " 6 " top, " *litte* " *little*.







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